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RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0109  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0107  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 6065  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: CROSS RIVER GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE ON THE STATE  
OF THE STATE

Classified By: Political Counselor Russell J. Hanks for reasons 1.4. (b  
& d).

11. (C) Action Congress (AC) Gubernatorial candidate Emmanuel Ibeshi discussed his campaign and the state of Cross River with Polcouns on January 31, highlighting the need for local government initiatives to "rescue" the state. He outlined his proposal to build development "communities" based on the local government areas (LGA) and depending on credible LGA chairmen to devote themselves to improving local economies and providing employment locally.

12. (C) Ibeshi also expressed concern about the political climate in the state. He discussed "dozens" of killings of local politicians and the ongoing harassment of journalists in the state. "We need to get the message out and the media is not paying attention," he lamented.

13. (C) When asked about current Governor Donald Duke, Ibeshi, a former supporter of Duke, complained that "the reality does not match the public relations campaign." He claimed that, in addition to pocketing government funds for himself, the much-vaunted "Tinapa Business Resort" was financed with funds withheld from the LGA budgets. Further, he said it was little more than a venue for trade fairs. "Look at the Trade Fair complexes in Lagos and Kaduna which are empty 95 percent of the time," he said. Ibeshi wondered how the promised international vendors could be enticed to Cross River, a state with scarce transportation connections to the rest of Nigeria or the world. He was also critical of Duke's concentration on tourism for the state. "We have no domestic tourism industry, foreigners cannot get here and our infrastructure needs remain unmet," he pointed out. Ibeshi suggested that Duke's "priorities have been all wrong."

14. (C) COMMENT: Ibeshi, a long-time Embassy contact, was very much bitter about his experience in the Duke administration, but was somewhat optimistic about the AC's chances at the state level. His assessment of Duke tracks what critics have said all along - that his image is more the product of an expensive and well-planned public relations effort than a serious attempt to tackle the root causes of the state's underdevelopment.  
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